

Hindustan Times- 24- November-2021

# When riparian nations join hands

A two-day meet on the Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna (GBM) river basins began in New Delhi on Monday. Hydrological experts from India's Central Water Commission and scientists from Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan and China are attending the meeting. One of the key aims is developing a hydrological SOS system — one that will share data on reservoirs, rivers, and dam waters round the year — to help mitigate floods, droughts, mudslides, and erosion. This is important because the areas that fall under the GBM system are flood-prone.

India and China have a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on data-sharing on the Brahmaputra river system, which provides warning for flooding during the monsoon. However, an assessment of the agreement by New Delhi-based think-tank, ORF, says there is a need for a comprehensive, advanced warning system because the existing data-sharing arrangement on hydro meteorological variation is limited. In addition, there have been some issues with data-sharing between the two neighbours. For example, in 2017, China declined to share data with India, saying that the instruments and installations in the measuring stations have been destroyed.

While the efforts of riparian neighbours to devise a holistic hydrological SOS system are welcome, early warning systems are only as good as the actions they catalyse in the affected nations. Timely, last mile dissemination of information and disaster preparedness are two critical issues. Over the years, India has improved its disaster response system vastly, but, as the increasing numbers of natural calamities show, it has to keep improving and strengthening it so that the socio-economic impacts are minimised.

Indian Express- 24- November-2021

# Maximum Support Policy

Not just MSP, rural India needs reforms that revive health of its soil and water resources, provide people employment and enhance quality of farmers' life



A R VASAVI

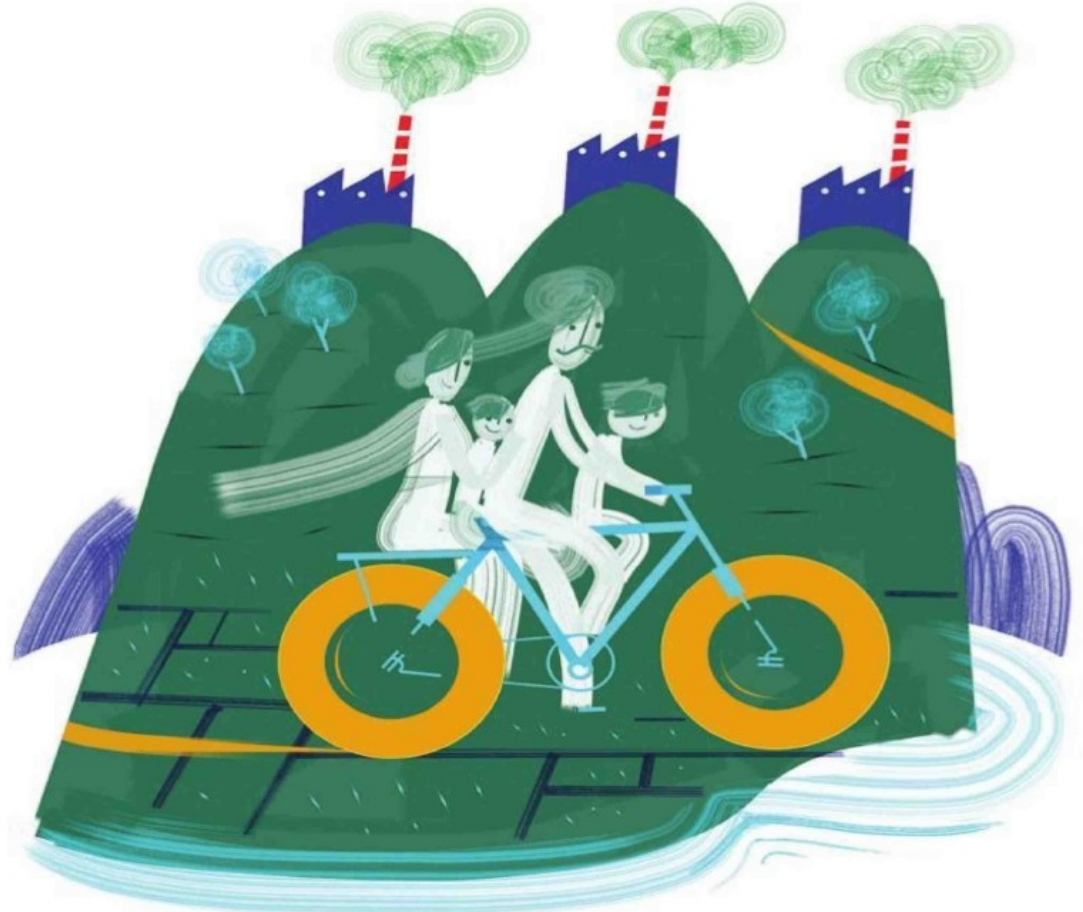
IN THE HISTORIC withdrawal of the three farm Acts, in the success of the resilience, commitment and sincerity of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha, is our own "David and Goliath" moment. How this initial and significant victory will pan out and what impact it will have, not only on agricultural policies but on how democracy and capital are entangled, will depend on the direction the farmers' movement takes.

The issue of "minimum support price" (MSP) for key agricultural commodities has been a persistent sticking point in the negotiations between the government and the farmers. The movement's leaders have demanded the legalisation of MSP, increasing this support price and extending it to all crops while the government has stonewalled such demands. While the issue of MSP relates primarily to cost-effective pricing and is understandably the fulcrum on which agriculture should be assessed as an enterprise, business, or means of livelihood, it may be important to go beyond it.

Much of rural India has largely been neglected economically while also being manipulated for votes. It may, therefore, be time to seek a package of "maximum support policies". This must emanate from the recognition that mere pricing, marketing and distribution of agricultural products cannot be the panacea for the ailments inflicted on rural India by the larger political economy of the country. Only holistic policies that address the structural inequities, institutional and administrative deficits and political distortions of rural India will provide it a new lease of life.

To begin with, a substantial and phased withdrawal from the Green Revolution model of promoting subsidised agriculture that's based on the use of industrial chemicals must be initiated. However, the claim that such a shift to "sustainable" agriculture will be via what Prime Minister Narendra Modi (in his speech on November 19) cited as "zero-budget natural farming" is an issue that must be assessed with caution. It will not be apt to have a single model of "natural farming" for India's diverse agro-climatic cultural zones. Instead, a combination of regionally evolved and established sustainable agro-cultures, that can be tweaked to rid them of their social inequities (such as bonded labour and tenancies) and made amenable to the new climatic trends, is required.

If the PM's concern for the small and marginal farmers is genuine, then policies to ensure equitable distribution of resources — land as well as water — and access to a range of alternative economic practices and support structures must also be framed. Instead of subsidies (that largely go to non-rural beneficiaries), moratoria on loans and populist payouts just before elections, it is imperative that payments be made to promote the spread of "restorative agriculture" — one that regenerates our soil and water resources and promotes seed and agro-biodiversity. A comprehensive programme on these lines will enable not only a transition to sustainable agriculture but also enable people to develop climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.



Supporting farmers to form collectives in which resources, labour, skills and knowledge are pooled for production, value addition and marketing could go a long way in correcting the multiple ways in which they are excluded from profits or gains. Democratisation and decentralisation of agricultural planning can be linked to revitalising ecologically suitable cultivation, facilitating local collection and distribution and sustaining local food cultures that can alleviate malnutrition. A new seed policy, which focuses on enabling local seed banks, can help farmers circumvent the problematic commercial seed industry.

The divide between the rural and agrarian, on the one hand, and the urban and industrial, on the other, is not tenable today. Promoting small-scale industries and processing centres that help rural areas to retain resources and skills along with providing employment is the answer to the vexed issue of unemployment and migration. Rural India requires a new economic deal that addresses past mistakes and heals the wounds caused by years of neglect in healthcare, education and other avenues that enhance the quality of life. Public institutions such as panchayats, anganwadis, schools and primary health centres require urgent reforms that de-bureaucratise state-citizen transactions and ensure that rural residents are treated as citizens, and not supplicants. Instead of the band-aid approaches that seek

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C R Sasikumar

to alleviate a range of problems caused by structural inequities and disadvantages, we need policies to address caste, ethnic, gender and class inequities.

Since the current political dispensation celebrates and invokes culture and heritage as its legitimising narratives, it would not be out of place for it, and us, to recognise that our myriad and rich agri-cultures were — and can continue to — be the basis of our civilisational identity. Instead of subscribing to alien models of corporatised and industrialised agriculture, whose devastating impacts are manifesting in widespread tragedies across the world, let us reclaim the knowledge heritage — while also eschewing the caste-based social system — of our diverse agri-cultures.

The poet Shiv Sundar has written that tractors have won over the tanks in this year-long stand-off between farmers and the state. Such a victory via non-violent means must enthrall us to intensify our solidarity towards a range of "maximum support policies" for rural and agrarian India. Our first effort should be to petition our respective MPs so that the forthcoming parliamentary session does not see just a recall of the three farm Acts but also paves the way for projects to realise the best for rural India.

Vasavi, a social anthropologist, is with the Punarchith Collective



Millennium Post- 24- November-2021

IN ITS THIRD AND FINAL YEAR

# Palla pilot project raises groundwater by 2.5 m

## OUR CORRESPONDENT

**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi government's pilot project to recharge groundwater at Palla has recorded the highest rise of up to 2.5 metres in the groundwater level in its third and final year on the back of a record-breaking rainfall this monsoon, officials said on Tuesday.

The groundwater level in the area — on the northern outskirts of the capital near the Delhi-Haryana border — had risen up to 1.3 metres in 2019 and up to 2 metres in 2020, the

officer said.

"The three-year pilot project which involved retaining excess Yamuna water in shallow reservoirs on the floodplains during the monsoon season has been completed. Overall, it has yielded very good results," an official told.

The Palla pilot project is a part of the Delhi government's endeavour to augment the city's water supply.

"We have recorded an increase of 0.5 to 2.5 metres in groundwater levels this year, the highest in the entire project

**'The project involved retaining excess Yamuna water in shallow reservoirs on the floodplains during monsoon. It yielded very good results'**

period. Certainly, the record rainfall has a major role to play," the official said.

The project report will be

submitted within a week to a committee appointed by the National Green Tribunal, the Centre and the Delhi government. Senior scientists will analyze the results.

According to the official, the project will be scaled up based on the recommendations of all stakeholders, including the Central Water Commission, Upper Yamuna River Board, Central Ground Water Board, Delhi Pollution Control Committee, Central Pollution Control Board.

After getting approval from

the National Green Tribunal, the Delhi government started the project in August 2019 on 40 acres of land along the Yamuna floodplains near Palla.

While gram sabhas owned 10 acres of this land, the government had acquired 30 acres from farmers on a three-year lease.

The government then created a 25-acre pond on the floodplains of the Yamuna to retain floodwater in the monsoon season and installed 33 piezometers to ascertain the rise in groundwater levels.

The Hindu- 24- November-2021

# Rain-hit areas in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry inspected

An inter-Ministerial Central team assesses damage to crops and infrastructure; meets affected farmers and representatives of farmers' organisations

TAMIL NADU BUREAU

A four-member inter-Ministerial Central team on Tuesday visited rain-affected areas in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. The delegation comprised of Rajiv Sharma, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA); Vijay Rajmohan, Director (IT), Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare; Rananjay Singh, Regional Officer, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways and M.V.N. Varaprasad, Under Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development.

In Cuddalore, the team assessed damage to infrastructure, roads and standing crops at Periyakanganakuppam, caused by flooding from Thenpennai river, which was in spate. K. Phanindra Reddy, Additional Chief Secretary/Commissioner of Revenue Administration and Collector K. Balasubramaniam elaborated the estimated loss on agriculture crops, roads and other infrastructure due to rain, with

the help of a photo exhibition. Official sources said they had submitted the list of damage to infrastructure and standing crops due to inundation. Agricultural department sources said standing crops, raised on 5,919 hectares, were inundated due to the recent spell of heavy rain. About 2,036 farmers from 45 villages in the district had lost crops, grown on about 1324.8 hectares. The Central team also inspected damage to crops, on 283.26 hectares, in Poovalai in Parangipettai block, and interacted with the farmers. The Central team left for Mayiladuthurai district, from where they are expected to proceed to Tiruchi.

Media persons were denied permission to cover the Central team's visit at Poovalai village. Earlier in the day, the team toured rain-affected places in the Puducherry region.

The team visited the coastal hamlet of Pillaichavady to study the damage caused by sea erosion. They also in-



**Gauging impact:** Farmers showing damaged crops to the Central team at Poovalai; right, the team surveying a paddy field in Tiruvarur on Tuesday. \*S.S. KUMAR \*SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

spected the affected farmlands in Bahour area, and interacted with people at N.R. Nagar.

## Relief for Puducherry

Puducherry Chief Minister N. Rangasamy sought assistance of ₹300 crore during his interaction with the inter-Ministerial Central team, in his chambers, on Monday. Paddy cultivation on around 7,000 hectares in Puducherry and Karaikal region were

affected in the heavy rain. Farmers also lost their livestock in floods, he said. The Chief Minister also briefed them about the damage in coastal areas due to sea erosion during the monsoon, an official said. He had already written to Union Home Minister Amit Shah about the damage caused due to rain in the Union Territory.

## Crop damage in Vellore

A team, consisting R.B. Kaul,



consultant, Ministry of Finance, Department of Expenditure; R. Thangamani, Director, Ministry of Water Resources; and Bhavya Pandey, Assistant Director, Ministry of Power, also visited flood-hit areas in Vellore and Ranipet districts. They visited affected areas, including Kapadi, Ponnai anaicut along the Palar river in Vellore, and agricultural areas like Nemili and Arcot in Ranipet along with district collectors.

Officials said crops such as paddy, ragi, maize, red gram, groundnut, cotton and tapioca, spread over 32,887.61 hectares in Vellore, Ranipet, Tirupattur and Tiruvannamalai districts, were damaged in the rain. "Some of the most affected areas include Nemeli, Thimiri and Arcot where paddy has been cultivated widely. The total loss incurred is estimated at ₹29.44 crore," D. Bhasakara Pandian, Collector, Ranipet,

told *The Hindu*. Tiruvannamalai alone accounted for 24,018 hectares of paddy that was affected, followed by Ranipet (2,342 hectares). Vellore was the least affected region with a loss of 341.04 hectares of paddy.

## Cauvery delta survey

Later, Mr. Sharma and his team checked the extent of damage to crops in the Cauvery delta districts. The team was accompanied by Additional Chief Secretary and Commissioner of Revenue Administration K. Phanindra Reddy.

They visited various parts of Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam and Mayiladuthurai districts for a first-hand account of the crop damages during the day. Officials in Thanjavur and Tiruvarur told the team that over 20,000 hectares of paddy crop had been affected in the two districts. The team inspected the flood-affected agriculture fields at Kavanoor and Kovilvenni in Tiruvarur district and at Amma-

pettai in Thanjavur.

Detailing the damages caused to the standing crop, the Collectors of Thanjavur and Tiruvarur, Dinesh Ponraj Oliver and P. Gayathri Krishnan, pointed out that paddy crop on 2,396 hectares in Thanjavur and 18,460 hectares in Tiruvarur had suffered damage.

At Nagapattinam, the team inspected submerged paddy fields at Erumsalai hamlet in Papa Kovil panchayat.

Apprising the team, Collector A. Arun Thamburaj said 18 houses were completely damaged and 808 houses were partially damaged.

They also assessed the crop damages at Tirumayiladi in Mayiladuthurai. Collector R. Lalitha said the rainfall had caused destruction to paddy crop on 5,423 hectares, affecting 5,645 farmers.

The team interacted with affected farmers and representatives of farmers' organisations.

Amar Ujala- 24- November-2021

## नमामि गंगे की कार्य योजना के क्रियान्वयन की होगी निगरानी

नई दिल्ली। राष्ट्रीय हरित अधिकरण (एनजीटी) ने नमामि गंगे परियोजना की कार्य योजना के क्रियान्वयन की प्रगति निगरानी के लिए राष्ट्रीय स्वच्छ गंगा मिशन (एनएमसीजी) और केंद्रीय प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड

**वरुणा व अस्सी  
नदियों में प्रदूषण  
पर सुनवाई के  
दौरान एनजीटी  
का निर्देश**

(सीपीसीबी) को निर्देश दिया है। वाराणसी में वरुणा और अस्सी नदी में प्रदूषण के खिलाफ दायर याचिका पर सुनवाई के दौरान एनजीटी ने यह कार्रवाई की।

याचिकाकर्ता सौरभ तिवारी ने कहा है कि ये दोनों गंगा की सहायक नदियां हैं और इन्हें प्रदूषणमुक्त किए बिना गंगा की सफाई नहीं की जा सकती। वाराणसी में गंगा जल की गुणवत्ता काफी खराब है। जस्टिस आदर्श कुमार गोयल की अध्यक्षता वाली एनजीटी पीठ ने कहा कि प्रस्तावित परियोजना की फंडिंग के मुद्दे पर एनएमसीजी व यूपी के मुख्य सचिव काम कर सकते हैं। नमामि गंगे में जहां भी पैसों की कमी आए तो उसे दूर करना राज्य सरकार की जिम्मेदारी होगी। ब्यूरो



Hindustan- 24- November-2021

# जलाशय से यमुना किनारे ढाई मीटर तक बढ़ा जलस्तर

नई दिल्ली | प्रमुख संवाददाता

यमुना किनारे पायलट प्रोजेक्ट के तहत बनाए गए जलाशयों से भूमिगत जल का स्तर बढ़ाने में खासी मदद मिली है।

इस मानसून सीजन के बाद पल्ला गांव के पास बनाए गए जलाशय के चलते भूमिगत जल के स्तर में ढाई मीटर तक की बढ़ोतरी की बात कही जा रही है। दिल्ली सरकार ने भूमिगत जल

के संभरण के लिए वर्ष 2019 में यमुना के किनारे जलाशयों को बनाने का काम प्रयोग के तौर पर शुरू किया था। पल्ला गांव के पास जलाशय के लिए दस एकड़ जमीन तो ग्रामसभा के पास थी, जबकि, 30 एकड़ जमीन किसानों से लीज पर ली गई। दिल्ली सरकार के एक अधिकारी ने बताया कि इस जलाशय में बाढ़ का पानी आता है। जो कि बाढ़ में उसमें संरक्षित रह जाता है।